



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Contact: Bob Gore (360) 902-1827

Mike Louisell (360) 902-1813

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

## **Produce shippers to take advantage of new WSDA e-form technology**

OLYMPIA – The state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) on July 1 launched a Web-based electronic form that can be used to record and track shipments of seven fruits and vegetables. The Certificate of Compliance and Permit Project, called C2P2 for short, is the first interactive Internet application at the department. It is designed to save time and labor for WSDA employees, and provide shippers, trade associations and commodity commissions with more accurate, real-time data for monitoring crop movement.

The certificate of compliance forms document that the quality of the fruit or vegetable meets state requirements for grades and condition at the time of shipping. Currently, about 100 fruit shippers have authority to issue the certificates under agreement with the department. They generate tens of thousands of certificates a month, often filled out by hand. By automating the system, WSDA employees hope to drastically reduce the need to manually input data from 400,000 to 500,000 forms each year.

“Our goal is to have 80 percent of the produce shippers switch to the electronic forms within the first year,” said Jim Quigley, manager of the department’s Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program. “By lowering operating costs, we can stabilize or even reduce program costs.” Savings for WSDA could reach \$150,000 a year.

C2P2 can be used to record shipments of apples, pears, cherries, peaches, apricots, prunes and asparagus. There is no charge for shippers to use the electronic form, and hand-written forms will still be accepted. The information entered is stored electronically and can be retrieved by shippers at anytime. The department uses the information to invoice shippers for the cost of carrying out the produce inspection program.

“We see this as a value-added benefit to the agricultural community that should increase the accuracy of shipping data and allow our staff to carry out other duties,” Quigley said.

He expects good participation, particularly once the cherry season is over and warehouse employees have more time to be trained. Apple shippers in Yakima and Wenatchee who tested the electronic form for several months reported good results. And, industry meetings held in early June to demonstrate the new process were well attended.

“We will work with shippers to give them guidance to understand this relatively easy-to-use tool,” Quigley said.

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Development of the Web application boosts department efforts to consolidate statewide operations and improve efficiencies in WSDA's finance and accounting systems. Bob Gore, assistant director of the Commodity Inspection Division at WSDA, said the department's use of technology cuts paperwork and provides alternative ways for shippers to complete certificates.

"In a broader context, this is the first in a series of automation initiatives that will not only provide for more efficient and cost-effective program operations, but will also serve to solidify the program's relevance with industry," Gore said.

For more information, contact Bob Gore at (360) 902-1827 by phone or via e-mail at [FVOly@agr.wa.gov](mailto:FVOly@agr.wa.gov). Information is also available on the department's Web site at <http://www.wa.gov/agr/eServices.htm>.

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